

Guiding Kids Through Troop 1500

Troop 1500 focuses on Girl Scouts–Lone Star Council in Texas, which participates in Girl Scouts Beyond Bars, a parent-child visitation program that seeks to preserve mutually affirming relationships between jailed parents and their daughters. The program was begun in 1992 by the Girl Scouts of Central Maryland Council and now involves more than 40 Girl Scout councils, including one that sponsors a father-daughter program. From incarceration to release, *Troop 1500* goes behind—and beyond—bars and explores the painful reality of families torn apart when a parent goes to prison.

This documentary deals with subject matter of a mature nature, which may be difficult for younger children to comprehend. Adult supervision is recommended for girls and boys ages 11–17 who view *Troop 1500*. When scheduling a screening, make sure there is ample time for discussion, which should be supervised and guided by an adult. It's important to create an open forum for girls to discuss the topics that arise in the documentary. Children are not necessarily looking for answers, but rather, an opportunity to debrief and process their emotions and thoughts.

Here are some tips for facilitating a sensitive topic discussion:

- Watch *Troop 1500* before the forum to process your own attitudes and emotional reactions to the subject matter. If you do not feel comfortable discussing certain topics, seek help in facilitating the discussion. Here are some topics that may come up:
 - drug use
 - violence
 - euthanasia
 - separation from mothers
 - expressing feelings through creative outlets
 - having a safe environment
 - single parent/guardian homes
 - communication issues with family members
 - fitting in with others
 - role of fathers and grandparents
 - trust/dependability issues
 - imprisonment
 - parole/probation
 - accepting responsibility for one's own actions
- Provide an open, trusting atmosphere so that children will feel comfortable expressing their feelings.
- Be sensitive to ethnic, cultural, and religious differences, family traditions, and social customs of girls.

- Start by asking a few general questions, such as:
 - How do you feel after watching this film?
 - What was the most important thing that you will take away from this film?
 - How can you translate what you saw into action?
- Let children initiate the discussion. Don't press an issue that girls are uncomfortable discussing.
- Make sure everyone has the opportunity to speak.
- If the discussion is in a group setting, provide an opportunity for participants to speak with you individually.
- Encourage everyone to listen to and accept each other
- Answer questions with questions so kids can reach their own conclusions.
- Encourage children to communicate with their parents. Most sensitive topics are rooted in values, and parental support and understanding are crucial.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON GIRL SCOUTS BEYOND BARS, CONTACT:

Christine lafrate
Program Manager
Girl Scouts Beyond Bars
212-852-8065 or Clafate@girlscouts.org

THE GSUSA/GSBB TOOL KIT ALSO CONTAINS ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT *TROOP 1500*, OR YOU MAY CONTACT:

Marion F. Swan
Marketing and Communications
212-852-8012 or Mswan@girlscouts.org

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

In the Zone: Living Drug Free

Girls Ages 11–14 (booklet)

Girls Ages 14–17 (booklet)

Guide for Girl Scout Adults

STUDIO 2B Resources

STUDIO 2B Focus: Take Charge

STUDIO 2B Focus: Express It!

STUDIO 2B Focus: Don't Sweat It!

STUDIO 2B Focus: uniquely ME! Inside and Out

¡Nadie Como Yo! Por Dentro y por Fuera

¡Nadie Como Yo! La Realidad del Asunto

STUDIO 2B Collection 11–13

STUDIO 2B Collection 13–15

STUDIO 2B Collection 15–17

STUDIO 2B Guide for Advisors

GIRL SCOUT RESEARCH INSTITUTE PUBLICATIONS

Feeling Safe: What Girls Say

Teens Before Their Time

Paths to Positive Youth Development